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CONSIDERATIONS

No 1125.

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ON THE

PRINCIPAL OBJECTIONS

AGAINST

OVERTURES FOR PEACE

WITH

FRANCE.

LONDON:

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CONSIDERATIONS

OF THE



FRANCIS

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P R E F A C E.

OF a performance which professes to be purely * argumentative, it is in general not of very great importance to communicate to the readers any previous information concerning the character or opinions of the author.

However, in the present times, in which the outrageous courses of the French have excited throughout the whole of Europe, and particularly in this country, the warmest political discussions, and have attached to

* Testimony is like an arrow shot from a long bow; the force of it depends on the strength of the hand who draws it.—Argument is like an arrow from a cross-bow, which hath equal force, though shot by a child.

BACON.

every

every difference of political sentiment, the utmost vehemence of animosity, it may not be unnecessary for the author of the following pages to apprise the world, that though he now recommends an attempt to obtain peace with France, he is not an admirer of French principles, or an approver of French proceedings.

On the contrary, he has contemplated with almost uninterrupted disapprobation, every proceeding of the French people since the month of July 1789, and every principle from which those proceedings were deduced, or upon which they have been defended,

The very destruction of the Bastile he does not now, and never did approve. He can excuse it; as he could excuse a child, who should make an ill use of a weapon for the first time put into his hand without any admonition of its nature or its use; but he cannot justify it,

For a considerable time past the French people seems to have acted as if it had been in a state of mischievous insanity. Nations may often learn prudence from the conduct of individuals. A prudent man, who should find himself in the neighbourhood of a mischievous madman, would, at first, perhaps endeavour to coerce him, and might possibly persist in such an attempt as long as there should appear any hope of confining him by force ; but in the moment in which he should be convinced that the resistance of the lunatic was not to be subdued by any exertions of strength, he would, doubtless, forbear to increase his irritation by a repetition of such attempts, and would then endeavour by mildness and indulgence to soothe him into tranquillity.

It surely is not absurd to argue, that the same conviction should produce in the conduct of a nation similarly circumstanced the same effect,

The arguments such as they are, which occurred to the author, on the subject of overtures for pacification, he has stated with great brevity, and he hopes with fairness. He has neither expanded them into bulk, nor ramified them into minuteness: and he may reasonably suspect that he has not exhibited or arranged them with the skill of an author by profession. They were committed to paper, in moments snatched from very different occupations.

Since his pamphlet has been in the press, he has been induced considerably to curtail it by the occurrence of disastrous events, which, though they have fully established the cogency of the reasonings, which he has excluded, at the same time rendered a detail of them superfluous.

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CONSIDERATIONS.

"IT is wonderful," says Johnson, "with what coolness and indifference war is contemplated by the greater part of mankind. Those who hear of it at a distance, or read of it in books, but have never presented its evils to their minds, consider it as little more than a splendid game, a proclamation, an army, a battle, and a triumph."

I hope, that wars in general have been regarded by but few of my countrymen with this coolness and indifference of contemplation; but however this may be, the evils and dangers of the present war have presented themselves with so much violence to our understandings and our bosoms, that no man can have failed to observe them, and but few have been fortunate enough not to have felt them.

I do not propose to consume the time of my readers or of myself, by a declamatory representation of the calamities necessarily attendant upon every war, or an impassioned detail of the horrors peculiarly incidental to the present one; A contest which obstructs our external commerce;

B

which

which interrupts our internal spirit and power of industry, which cuts off our people, enfeebles our credit, augments our debts, diminishes our revenues, and exhausts our resources ; and which threatens even (however remotely many persons may think) the security of private property, and the stability of our constitution, must be regarded by every Englishman, as a most deplorable misfortune.

Those, therefore, who maintain the inexpediency of attempting to put an end to it, must consider the continuance of it as the smaller of two evils ; and must suppose, that overtures of peace would have a tendency to superinduce some greater evil.

The justice of this opinion will be best examined, by stating the evils which they tell us would be occasioned by overtures of peace, and afterwards, by inquiring what reason there is to believe that those evils would ensue, and considering whether they really are of such magnitude or severity as to counterbalance the continuance of the horrors of hostility.

The chief objections against offering to France terms of peace at this time which I have heard, seem to be two :

1st. That to make a peace with France at this time, would be only to afford her a respite from the distresses of war, and to enable her in that interval to recruit her force and qualify herself

self to execute her desire of resuming hostilities with more energy, and under more advantageous circumstances than those under which she is now able to conduct them.

This proposition, if proved to be true, and if contemplated alone, without taking into consideration any collateral circumstances and probabilities, does, I confess, seem to afford a weighty objection to a present termination of the war—for I am very ready to admit, that if our only alternative were either at this time to continue the hostilities in which we are engaged, or to suspend them for a while, and after a short interval to resume them—I imagine, many sober, wise, and intelligent persons might think the continuance of them now (lamentable, destructive, and ruinous, as they are) a less evil than the only other course which we should be supposed to have before us. I imagine that they might be of this opinion, not only from consideration, that when war should be resumed, the state of the French force and resources might (for we must observe, it is impossible to ascertain that they would) be of more efficacy in comparison with our own than they are at present ; but also, from the further consideration of the very great expense which we must necessarily incur by a sudden emergence from a state of peace into war, above that which is suffi-

cient to continue a war in which we already find ourselves engaged.

Upon these grounds, I admit that the proposition, if proved to be true, and if contemplated alone and without taking into consideration any collateral circumstances or probabilities, will seem to afford a weighty objection to the immediate termination of the war.

But let us consider how far we have reason to believe that the proposition is true.

It is very evident, that unless there is some specific reason which will induce us to believe, that after an interval of peace, the French would entertain a *desire* of renewing hostilities, and that they would also be *able* to renew them with more energy and under more advantageous circumstances than those under which they now are able to conduct them, the proposition is itself unfounded, and that therefore no other conclusion can be established upon it.

Now, what specific reason have we to believe, that after an interval of peace, the French would entertain such a desire to renew hostilities?

It seems universally agreed, that the bulk of the French people are most sincerely tired of the present war and desirous of peace. All the speculations of theory, and all the evidences of fact, tend so uniformly and so incontrovertibly to this deduction, that to deny it, or to undertake a
formal

formal proof of it, would be equally absurd. But if the bulk of the French nation are now desirous to conclude the war, I cannot discover any reason which should induce them to wish for its renewal after a peace shall have taken place.

However, it will not be improper to endeavour to form an opinion of the probable sentiments of the French people on this subject, by considering what dispositions it is reasonable to expect will be respectively produced by the different States of *untried being*, in some one of which that nation must, after the conclusion of peace, exist.

After a peace shall have been concluded, the French nation must subsist under some of these modifications; either a domination there of some kind or other will be consolidated into a distinct and definite form of government, supported by a sufficient degree of sincere popular favour, operating with regularity and universality, receiving general voluntary obedience, and enjoying the possession of actual strength and the reasonable expectation of future stability; or the nation will be reduced to a state of actual civil war; or to a state of greater or less internal commotion not amounting to a civil war; or it will be divided into different and distinct governments; or lastly, the present unembodied and indefinite despotism will continue to subsist.

It

It is not my intention to inquire which of these modifications will most probably take place there, and still less am I disposed in this place, to consider which of them would be most advantageous in itself or its consequences to France, to the neighbouring nations, or to the general interests of Europe. I am content to establish my assurance, that under neither of them is it likely that there should be a particular desire on the part of France to renew hostilities against this country.

There certainly is no reason to suppose that this desire would prevail in a regular and established government there, of whatever kind or denomination it should be. Any regular established government would seek to promote the prosperity of its subjects, and to facilitate the course of its administration by the maintenance of tranquillity, rather than by a state of war to impoverish and distress its people, to embarrass its own operations, and to weaken the foundations of its own stability.

Neither can we believe, that if the nation were in a state of actual civil war either party would be desirous to involve itself in a war of aggression with this country, since the effect of such a measure must necessarily be to add to the opposition of its internal foes the decisive hostility of so near and powerful an external enemy.

For a similar reason, if internal commotions were prevalent within the country, the rulers,
 whoever

whoever they might be, would above all things avoid an external war of aggression, which would speedily convert those local, occasional, and desultory resistances into a civil war, general, permanent, and systematical.

Upon supposition that the French territory should be divided into a plurality of distinct states, the improbability of their uniting in a war of aggression is so manifest and so gross, that to illustrate it would be at once a waste of time, and an insult to common sense.

As to the present unexampled system of indescribable despotism, it seems impossible that if a peace were speedily concluded, it could continue to exist in its present indefinite form and dictatorial administration. It must in no very long space of time, either consolidate itself into a practical representative democracy (such as it is at present in theory) regularly administered and peacefully obeyed, or it will be superseded by some other more substantial institution of government: though certainly in the mean time, internal struggles of very great violence, ferocity and bloodshed may occur. However, I think it must appear very clear, that we have no specific reason to apprehend a renewal of hostilities from France, either during the existence of those internal struggles, or after they shall have given place to a fixed government of what kind soever it may be,

I have

I have thus, as I proposed, endeavoured to form an opinion of the probable sentiments of the French people on the subject of future peace or war, by considering what dispositions it is reasonable to expect will be respectively produced by the different modifications of government or anarchy, under some of which that nation must subsist after a peace shall have been concluded. And surely, there does not appear a reason for supposing that any of them will produce a disposition to renew the calamities of war.

But here I cannot omit an observation which I think must very much encourage us to hope for a continuance of peace, if once established; and which does not result from the consideration of France as subsisting in any particular modification of government.

It appears to me, that in the present state of the inhabitants of France, the restoration of peace would have an essential tendency to prolong its own duration over and above the operation of any particular form of political establishment there.

The French have now been in a state of foreign war during nearly three years. Throughout almost the whole of that period the inhabitants have been suffering the most grievous calamities of every kind. External commerce and internal manufacture, as far as either contributes to supply

the comforts and elegancies of life, have been generally obstructed; the commodious instruments of the intercourse of property, the precious metals, have been completely forced out of circulation; successive confiscations, more extensive and more vigorous than any of which we read in history, have been inflicted upon the wealthy of almost every description; all property has been placed in a state of the most perfect insecurity; the most unmanly, barbarous, sanguinary, and unrelenting cruelties of every kind have been perpetrated; persecution imbibited by insult, assassination aggravated by the mockery of judicial condemnation, massacre exasperated and prolonged by imprisonment, by deliberation, menace, and a previous assurance of the doom. Finally, every possession, all the fruits of the earth, the very persons themselves of the people, the produce of incessant labour, the exertion of bodily force, have been impressed without limitation into the service of the state.

To all this the people have submitted. Whether the remote cause of their outrageous practices, and of the submission to them, has been the infliction of that dreadful malady, to which, in the opinion of the profound and pious Bishop Butler, nations, as well as individuals, are subject, a radical perversion of the reasoning faculty; or some supernatural influence upon the under-

standings and the consciences, I pretend not to explain. However, they have been practised and submitted to under the immediate operation of an enthusiastic devotion to some indefinite theory of visionary liberty. For to account for these practices, or the submission of the majority of the people to them, as has often been superficially done, by what is called the force of terror, has always appeared to me a most unsatisfactory, and unintelligible mode of speaking. By whom was the terror excited?—and by whom were the terrifiers invested with the power of exciting it? Who terrified the terrifiers?—and by whom was universal submission to its exercise practised? According to this explanation, the people terrify the people—Prince Prettyman is made to terrify Prince Prettyman.

The fact, however, is, that the French People have departed very far not only from the speculative systems of philosophy, not only from the theoretical and practical doctrines of morality and religion, not only from all the received opinions upon political reasonings and economy, but from the whole system of sentiment and conduct established among European nations; to speak the truth in one word, from a state of civilisation. Of a continuance in their present state, it is impossible to estimate the mischiefs to themselves and to the whole European world.

But

But the continuance of their present state is by no means the greatest evil to be apprehended. It is scarcely possible that they should continue stationary : it is contrary to the nature of the thing, to the relations of history, to the former well-known national character of the French, and to all the experience which we have had of their new character. If they do not return to civility, they will proceed farther into the wilds of barbarism.

To stop this horrible progress, I can conceive no method so likely as the restoration of peace. If peace were restored to them, there is, I think, reason to hope that they may yet be recovered. By a speedy peace the frantic irritation of their minds would be allayed, they would have opportunity, and probably inclination, to provide some practicable scheme of government for themselves; and, above all, they would return to the arts, to the employments, and to the enjoyments of peace. The artificial wants of life would revive, industry and commerce would afford the means of gratification, and every hour would increase their attachment to their recovered blessings, and their disinclination to recur to that course by which they had been suspended.

The existence of peace would, therefore, as I said before, essentially tend to prolong its own duration.

In addition to this, the destruction of their property, the penury of their revenues, and the vacuity and feebleness of their population, would all disable them from carrying on any war without adopting such extreme measures as they have in the present war been obliged to employ, and without incurring the same consequences which in this war those measures have superinduced, the desolation of their country and the beggary of its inhabitants.

On the other hand, if by the continuation of hostilities, the irritation of the French nation is to be aggravated, and their ferocity exasperated, they will be driven to the extreme of barbarity; they will become a new tribe of Huns and Visigoths in the heart of Europe. The arts of peace will be wholly lost among them, the blessings of peace will be forgotten or despised. The passing generation will be weaned from those delights by the inveteracy of military habits; that which is approaching, will condemn those pleasures which they have never tasted, and which their fathers and companions have always held up to them as objects of scorn or of abhorrence. In a warfare with a people advancing into this state, success is scarcely less dangerous to us than defeat. Every conquest which we make in their colonies confines with new force all their thoughts to their own personal concerns. Every interruption which we cause to their commerce
increases

increases the alienation of their disposition from the arts of peace.

And, to confess the truth, (a lesson taught equally by reason and experience) such a nation as France, carrying on hostilities according to their present system, must be upon the continent irresistible, unless it is opposed by the same kind of armies, by the opponent nations acting in masses. From a war so conducted on the continent of Europe, the horrors which must necessarily ensue, are such as may be conceived better than described—the horrors which probably may ensue, are such as, perhaps, imagination itself will be unable to suggest !

We are now, in the second place, to inquire what specific reason there is which should induce us to believe that, after an interval of peace the French would be *able* to renew hostilities with more energy, and under more advantageous circumstances, than those under which they now are able to conduct them.

Upon the conclusion of a peace, either the French would reduce their naval and military forces to what is called a peace establishment, or they would not ; and their conduct in this respect would be of immediate and most manifest notoriety.

If they did not, after remonstrances, make such reduction, it would be a just and reasonable

ble ground of immediately renewing the war; and we, therefore, most undoubtedly should renew it, unless our ministers should find it more adviseable to preserve an armed peace. So that, in this case, the most unfavourable situation in which we could be placed, would be in no respect whatever worse than that in which we now are.

In two respects, I think, it would be more advantageous. For, first, the inhabitants of this country would be more cordially united in the support of a war which they found to be absolutely necessary and inevitable: and, secondly, the inhabitants of France would, probably, be less eager in the maintenance of a war, of which they must be sensible that, on their part, it was unnecessary and unjust; and their soldiery would partake of this sentiment, and consequently, take up arms with much less alacrity and ardour, than that with which they now fight, in protecting from destruction that system of freedom (as they are taught to believe it) which they have adopted, and to defend from invasion their native country.

If, upon the conclusion of peace, France should reduce her naval and military forces to a peace establishment, it seems impossible to conceive that, after an interval she should be able to renew hostilities in a more advantageous

manner than she now conducts them. On the contrary, we have already had occasion to notice several considerations, from which it seems most incontestable, that her resumption of arms would be attended with a variety of the most distressful circumstances.

Whatever difficulties we should find in making naval and military preparations, she would feel in a degree greater beyond all comparison. She would, at once be destitute of those resources by which ordinary wars are supported, and of the power to make those extraordinary exertions, by which she has been able to maintain her present most unexampled conflict. On the one hand, she would be unable to raise large revenues; on the other, her subjects would not consent to supply the deficiencies of these by irregular exactions, forced loans, and ruinous confiscations. There would most unquestionably be a general disinclination to war among all persons of any property, and there would undoubtedly be an universal horror of a war to be supported by such violence, outrage, and tyranny, as has been exerted to maintain the present one. As long as the fever of intoxication continues, the sot has no reluctance to repeat his draught; but, when the fumes of intemperance evaporate, while he suffers under the consequences of his excess, in the hour of pain, lassitude,

lassitude, and debility, he is not easily persuaded to resort to the course by which he knows these consequences to have been occasioned.

The enthusiasm, too, of the present war will be wanting; that enthusiasm which is always felt in a contest allied, or supposed to be allied, to the cause of freedom, it will be impossible to excite in France in a future war of aggression. With the enterprise of such a war, the profoundest and most indefatigable subtlety will surely find it difficult to persuade a Frenchman that his liberty is connected; and, indeed, if this persuasion were established, surely the French nation will not speedily forget the dire experience by which they have been taught, that external hostilities do not always tend to consolidate the fabric of liberty at home.

I suspect, too, that it would, after an interval of peace, be a business of difficulty, almost amounting to impossibility, to provide men (I speak not now of the difficulty of paying them) to supply large fleets and armies. At present every man in the country is a soldier, desperate either from enthusiasm or terror. As the multitudes who compose the immense armies with which they now cover the plains of Europe, are diminished by disease, hardships, famine, or the sword, they are instantly supplied by fresh exportations,

tations from their domestic *officina militum*,* and the contents of this storehouse will certainly not be exhausted as long as the present war shall continue, at least as long as it shall continue to be conducted on the part of the enemies of France by any method less violent than the horrors of general requisition, and rising in a mass.†

But after an interval of peace, the state of things will be very different. Of the then inhabitants of France, the tranquil habits of agriculture and the peaceful arts of commerce will have disinclined and incapacitated a great proportion from the dangers and difficulties of military service. Then too will be felt, in the decrepitude of population, the injurious effects of the

* By an account from Paris, published in the *Times* of January 15, 1795, the French army consisted, on December 21, 1794, of 879,000 men.

† Political arithmeticians compute that the number of fighting men (that is, of men between the ages of 18 and 56) in any country, is one-fifth of the whole number of inhabitants. The population of France before the Revolution was, according to the lowest estimate, 25,000,000 persons. If we suppose this number to have sustained a diminution of 5,000,000 from the various causes which have operated upon it in the course of the last five years, there will then remain a population of 20,000,000 persons, and consequently 4,000,000, fighting men.

present astonishing exertions. While a sinew is kept in a state of preternatural tension, it will for a long time fulfil the purpose for which it was extended: it is after it has been suffered to collapse, that the mischief superinduced will appear, by a total loss of energy and tone.

And this impotence of population, besides the actual diminution of fighting men, which it must occasion, will, by another consequential operation, obstruct the completion of large levies. In a country of the fertility and extent of France, so thinned of its inhabitants, the price of labour must be extravagantly high; who then will quit the opulence of the plough or the loom for the beggary of the sword? a sword, too, unaccompanied by one cheering drop, distilled from the intoxicating branches of the tree of liberty.

II. The other chief objection against immediate overtures of peace is now to be considered. It is said that there is at present no government in France with whom we could treat, who are of efficacy and stability sufficient to pledge the nation to the observation of a treaty.

I must confess that I cannot discover in this objection any real weight.

In the first place, I have already endeavoured to shew, that whatever measures the French nation might adopt after the conclusion of a peace, it could not be placed by them in a more advan-

tageous relative situation than that in which it now carries on the war ; and if this is true, there is evidently nothing in the objection : for if it is clear, that let the French violate the treaty of peace as soon as they may think fit after its ratification, they will not be able to resume hostilities with greater advantages than those which they now possess ; it will necessarily follow, that no want of faith on their part in the observation of the treaty, can produce any possible evil to this country.

But I cannot dismiss this objection without a little farther animadversion.

It does not appear to me that the charge of versatiliſy in the French nation, ſince the commencement of the preſent war, is very well founded. I really think that their conduct has been upon the whole as conſiſtent and uniform as that which is exhibited by nations in general, and much more ſo than could have been expected from a nation in their peculiar circumſtances.

As to external meaſures, the allies cannot, I am ſorry to ſay, impute to them any thing like verſatiliſy or inſtancy : their object has been uniform, and it has been purſued with uniform and uninterrupted exertion.

Nor do I perceive in their internal conduct thoſe evidences of inſtancy with which many perſons (who I ſuſpect not to have attended with much care to the events which were tranſacted) repreſent it to be loaded.

The grand principle of their internal proceedings has been a love of liberty (a most misguided fanatical love of an impracticable liberty, no doubt): Upon this principle they have uniformly conducted their measures, and ever since the continuance of the war they have uniformly concurred in the support of one system of political institution, as most likely to effectuate their end; and this with a degree of unanimity which I think is, upon the whole, surprising.

To *persons*, indeed, their attachment has not been so constant; but this very circumstance proves in the strongest manner the force of their attachment to *one system of measures*. What occasioned the fall of Brissot and the co-adjutors of his faction? What occasioned the deposition of Danton and Robespierre? Any change in the sentiments or disposition of the French nation respecting the great objects of political establishment?—Nothing like it—on the contrary, a determined persistency in the same sentiments and disposition. All these men were put to death, not because the nation had altered its object of pursuit, but because it was made to believe that they harboured designs inimical to the attainment of that object.

Even in the army the principle of attachment to a brave, skilful, and popular commander, under whom they had long fought successfully, has

has been proved by the catastrophe of Dumouriez in no degree to countervail their political sentiments and character. I do not recollect that the slightest interruption of their military operations was occasioned by the dereliction of that successful general.

But, indeed, it seems *peculiarly* absurd to speak of a want of efficiency in the rulers of France to pledge the nation to the preservation of peace. It is agreed on all hands that a great bulk of the people are desirous of peace, and we yet see that their rulers are able to prevail on them to carry on war, and a war of the most destructive kind. If the rulers have influence enough to persuade them to endure an evil which they *dislike*, by what charm are they to be rendered incapable of persuading them to preserve a *blessing* which they must receive with *delight*, and of which it is now agreed that they are *desirous*?

Another objection to immediate overtures of peace I have heard made in the form of this argument, that the French resources are nearly exhausted, and must soon be completely so, and that therefore by continuing the war some time longer, we shall be able to obtain more advantageous terms of peace than could be procured at this time.

Of this argument it is to be remarked, that those who advance it require no answer until they shall have shewn what are the best terms upon which we can obtain peace now : and this it is impossible sufficiently to ascertain, but by the instrumentality of a negotiation.

When by means of a negotiation we shall have learned upon what terms the French will conclude a peace, it will then be for us to consider whether we should consent to them, or persist in the prosecution of the war, in the expectation of obtaining others more advantageous. Till then, it is absurd to enter minutely into such a disquisition.

Indeed, I do not profess myself to be sufficiently instructed in the science of politics, to deduce a balance of profit and loss resulting from the computation of numerous, extensive, and intricate items of policy, manufacture, colonisation, and finance ; and I certainly am not very much disposed to enter upon any calculation which will require me to set the addition of 100,000l. a year perhaps of revenue, or the subjugation of an island, against the innumerable and unutterable calamities of war.

However, to persons who delight in such operations, I would submit the following observations on the extreme importance of retaining in our hands the French West India islands.

I have shewn that the greatest apprehensions must be entertained from the continuance or farther

farther progress of the French in their present approximation to barbarism. It is very clear that nothing can tend more to emancipate them from such a state, than the revival of the arts of peace, and a restoration of the connections of commerce. These, besides generating in the mass of people a disinclination to any wars, and an abhorrence of such war as that which now subsists, would reintegrate a wealthy and powerful class of men, whose constant interest it must in a most peculiar degree always be, that their country should abstain from a state of hostility. By withholding from the French all their West India islands, we shall retard her return to civilization, and we shall weaken her national fondness, and diminish her national interest, to prolong the continuance of a state of amity. But this is not all, we certainly owe the hostile emancipation of our American colonies, at the time at which it occurred, in great measure to our improvidence in not having left to the French at the peace of 1763, a community of interest in their subjugation. Let those who maintain the policy of colonisation, beware how they subject us to the loss of our own West Indies by a similar imprudence. And let them recollect, that these colonies are liable to be wrested from us, not only by the means which emancipated North America, but by the seduction of our negroes from

from the principles or practice of submission. Either the system of colonisation is of political advantage, or it is not; if it is not, we can lose nothing by suffering France to retain her West India islands; if it is, we ought to suffer her to retain them, as a security for the preservation of our own.

I would also recommend to our statesmen to consider whether it would not be cheaper to purchase the safety of our allies by the cession of these colonies, than by the payment of enormous subsidies to one prince, whose sincerity in our cause we have good reason to distrust,* or by guaranteeing the debts of another, upon whose

* Situated as are the dominions of the king of Prussia, it would have been in him the most outrageous impolicy to have contributed to effectuate that which seems to have been one of the original objects of the military operations in the present war—the dismemberment of France; or, indeed, to have co-operated in any way to aggrandise the emperor at the expense of France. The completion of either of those objects would have left him without any controul upon the power of the emperor; and in such an event, his own conduct and designs must doubtless have suggested to him how conveniently the territories of Prussia might be divided between Austria and Russia. The consideration of this may serve, in some degree, to explain the sudden retreat of the Duke of Brunswick, in 1792, and some other of the difficulties in the history of the present war.

fideliſy, till the * time of payment, we certainly can have no ſufficient reaſon to depend.

With reſpect to the declenſion of the reſources of France, I profeſs myſelf not poſſeſſed of ſufficient information to ſtate any thing as a fact with poſitivenefs; and I ſuſpect that thoſe who advance aſſertions of their decline with the utmoſt vehemence, and repeat them with the utmoſt pertinacity, poſſeſs not much better information than myſelf. Predictions, indeed, are made with great confidence by perſons in the higheſt ſtations, of the greateſt abilities, and of the moſt extenſive knowledge, that the reſources of France muſt ſoon fail. Thoſe who have

* How incompetent the wiſeſt and beſt informed ſtateſmen are to form conjectures of the changes and chances which may occur in the political world during ſeven future years, will appear from the following words uttered by Mr. Pitt in the Houſe of Commons, on February 17th, 1792, about eleven months before we were engaged in the preſent ſanguinary war. "There never was a time in the hiſtory of this country, when, from the ſituation of Europe, we might more reasonably expect fifteen years of peace than we may at the preſent moment."—See the Speech of the Right Hon. William Pitt, on Friday the 17th day of February, 1792, printed for Robinſons and Stockdale.—Should not the conſciouſneſs of this inability to regulate or foreſee the courſe of political events, on all occaſions induce ſtateſmen not readily to relinquish the certain bleſſings of preſent peace, in the expectation of greater, remote, and contingent advantages?

much faith in these predictions I would remind, that the same predictions have been made with the same assurance, by the same persons, almost without intermission, during the course of the last two years; and hitherto they have been most lamentably falsified. It was highly probable, indeed, from the first, that they should be so; for they were not founded on fact, but erected upon analogies formed from observations of times and circumstances, to which the present times and circumstances have not a shadow of resemblance.

Let us not, however, continue in this delusion; let us not, without an effort towards pacification, see France advance her victorious arms over Holland, Italy, and Spain, *Et ab ipso bello ducere opes animumque*; let us not, while she is subjugating the force, and corrupting the inhabitants of the neighbouring states, indulge ourselves in delusive opinions of her present, and delusive expectations of her future circumstances and conduct; let us not continue to apply to her in her present state, the same reasonings which we should have employed towards the old monarchy of France, when all her operations were perplexed by the intricacy of diplomatic system, obstructed by the tediousness of ministerial formality; and above all, confined within barriers raised by the principles of civilization.

To

To compute the French resources by the same rule by which we calculate the resources of civilized nations, is erroneous to a degree of absurdity.

In France we behold a diminished population, a slender and embarrassed commerce, stagnated manufactures, the absence of individual wealth, a total disappearance of the circulating medium, no regular *valuable* revenue at home, and very little credit abroad—What then are her resources?—Her resources are the perfect and absolute dominion over all the labour and bodily force of every animal, over all the productions of the earth, and over every inanimate substance, within a territory containing 140,000 square miles.

Whether there is or is not in the hands of the rulers of France any great accumulation of the precious metals, is, perhaps, a matter of some doubt. It certainly is not improbable that this should be the case, and many persons very well versed in the knowledge of the state of specie in Europe, are decidedly of opinion that it must be so, after making very ample allowances for the quantities which may be supposed to have been concealed by individuals, and ecclesiastical, and other corporations in that country.

If there is no such accumulation, the operations of France must doubtless be carried on with

much more difficulty than they would be if the case were otherwise; but nobody surely will argue from hence, that her exertions must therefore cease, or her operations fail?

Money is desirable on two accounts; for its allowed value, and for its convenient circulation. The nation which has it not, must transact all the intercourses of life with a considerable degree of incommodiousness; but to a nation in the present state of France, this is a mere circumstance, of very inferior moment: and money certainly is not necessary on account of its allowed value, to a nation who can procure without it those articles of subsistence, and those implements of war, in the ability to purchase which the supposed necessity of money consists. Let us not learn to condemn the power of France from the belief that she possesses no specie. When Attila and the Hunns ravaged all Europe, and compelled the emperor Theodosius to become their tributary; or when, somewhat earlier, Alaric and the Goths took and plundered Rome itself, I suspect that each of those barbarous leaders achieved these exploits without the possession of a very ample treasury.

What reasonable man, who has observed the events of the last three years, and contemplates the present aspect of affairs, will take upon himself to say, that after the war shall have been prolonged during any farther given time, there is

reason to conclude that our situation will be more favourable than it is at this moment ?

Upon the whole ; as it seems agreed that the bulk of the French nation are desirous of peace : As it does not appear that if a peace were made, France would have any particular desire to violate it ; or if she should, that she would be at all benefited, or we at all injured by the violation : As the notion that the present governors of France are unable to bind the nation to the observance of a treaty, seems altogether groundless : As there do not appear any reasons to justify the belief that the French resources are exhausted, besides those which have been urged during the last two years in support of such a belief, and have throughout the same space of time proved fallacious : As the aspect of affairs does not afford any reasonable expectation that the prolongation of the war will render our situation more favourable than it is at present ; As it is not unreasonable to believe that the cession of part of our conquests to the French, (which would doubtless weigh much with that people,) would be in itself a matter of policy on our part : and as in addition to the general motives of policy, economy, and humanity, which are to be urged in recommendation of terminating all wars, it, in these times, appears of the very utmost importance to the welfare of this nation, and
of

of all Europe, that France should be restored to a state of external tranquillity : It is most seriously and sincerely to be hoped, that the King's ministers will institute a negociation for peace, or at least that the houses of parliament will, without delay, make known to the French nation that we are ready to enter into such a negociation. If, after measures of this kind, the rulers of France shall refuse to treat for peace at all, or to accede to just and reasonable terms, we shall at least be able to justify our conduct to ourselves and to posterity ; and one good consequence will certainly ensue, that all the inhabitants of this country will be united for their own defence, in the closest and most vigorous co-operation ; and in such an event I must say, in the emphatical words of Mr. Pitt, on the first day of this session, " If it be the inscrutable will of
 " Providence that this monstrous system, which
 " threatens destruction to mankind, is to make
 " head against us, let it not be said that we
 " shrink from it, or play the unmanly part ; if
 " it should come, I have but one resolution :
 " and will take care that my mind shall never
 " be embittered by a retrospect of my own con-
 " duct."

4 OCT 58

FINIS.